

IN THE SAME CHARISM...

with responsibility



n. 3 - 2017

**COMPANY OF ST. URSULA
SECULAR INSTITUTE OF SAINT ANGELA MERICI
FEDERATION**

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CONTENTS

To the readers	p. 4
Going forth	p. 6
A Thought from the President of the Federation	p. 7
A Thought from the Ecclesiastical Assistant	p. 9

PILGRIMAGE OF THE FEDERATION

• Serenity and mutual openness	p. 12
• The joy of belonging to a large family	p. 14
• An enriching pilgrimage	p. 17
• The unexpected is always more beautiful	p. 19
• So much beauty in our suitcase	p. 22
• A pilgrimage of prayer and praise	p. 25
• Snippets of emotion	p. 28

FROM THE COMPANIES AND THE GROUPS

➤ Caltanissetta: 70th anniversary of the death of Marianna	p. 31
➤ Modena-Bologna pilgrimage	p. 33
➤ Canada 50th anniversary of the Company	p. 34
➤ Cameroun	p. 37
➤ Indonesia	p. 38
➤ Madagascar: August 2017	p. 39
➤ Brazil South	p. 41

INCOMING MAIL	p. 43
OUR NEW WEBSITE	p. 46
PRAYER FOR THE ASSEMBLY	p. 47



TO THE READERS

Meet as dear sisters...

I had the good fortune, on arriving in Quebec, Canada, of being the guest of Thérèse, the vice-directress, and I was surprised to discover that Thérèse is an artist. She sculpted this lovely image in wood.

It is the most beautiful image of Saint Angela as a pilgrim that I have ever seen...

and therefore I make it an icon for my reflections about this exquisite summer.

I want to reflect precisely about the need to go forth... to make ourselves pilgrims, to seek and give value to each encounter....

The pilgrimage was a Merician experience: Experts about Saint Angela tell us that our Madre and Foundress spent more than a year of her life as a pilgrim. Between 1516, when she arrived in Brescia, and 1535, when she founded the Company, she was on pilgrimage an average of one day out of every twenty.

Angela went forth from the countryside to the city, from her own world to the world of a person in need, went forth to destinations of faith. She could get moving: Desenzano, le Grezze, Salò, Brescia, Jerusalem, Venice, Rome, Varallo, Mantua, Cremona (and that was in the 1500s). She was always ready to go forth without needing monasteries, structures, formalities... a free woman, able to create liberty. She went forth in all sorts of ways: on foot, on horseback, by ship....

Besides her life, Angela Merici left us in her writings an invitation to a great spiritual pilgrimage. We can all make this pilgrimage at any age and in any situation.

Meet as dear sisters...

Going forth from ourselves and from our homes, including in our Company: *"Please go often, as you have time and opportunity, to visit your dear daughters and sisters"* (Fifth Counsel 5, 1). This too is

secularity: to meet one another as sisters by visiting at home, where we live and relate to each other.

The lifestyle that Saint Angela recommends is dynamic, not sedentary: “*Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart, for without doubt you will see marvelous things...*” (Prologue to the Counsels 17-18). That is to say: to see *marvelous things*, it is necessary to go forth, to move, to hope, to cry out if necessary.... No staying in our little nests, whatever those may be....

“Meet as dear sisters... and thus, talking over spiritual matters, rejoice together, and together encourage one another, which will be no small help to them” (Eighth Legacy 3-6).

❖ **Meeting:** meeting allows for person-to-person rapport, seeing one another, recognizing sisterly affection;

❖ **Talking over:** meeting allows for talking, discussing together, exchanging similar or unique experiences in spiritual and consecrated life;

❖ **Rejoicing:** meeting allows for experiencing together the joy of the Lover of us all and the joy of our shared choice, as a charismatic gift of the Company;

❖ **Encourage:** meeting allows for the consolation and comfort that come from the normal sharing of joys and sufferings, because it is normal to share about our choices and our lives.

This issue of our journal offers us an echo of the Federation’s pilgrimage, brings us news of our going forth into the world among our sisters and companies, brings into our own lives and hearts the experiences and events of our global reality... and this is all joy, comfort and *no small help*.

And now, to close, a confidence: I do not know what the heavenly Jerusalem will be like, but I’m sure of one thing: **every meeting, especially within the company, is consolation and help. So, let us meet one another....**

The joy of meeting is already paradise on earth!

Caterina Dalmasso

Going forth

- *All roads end within us...*
- *The wise person never thinks s/he has arrived...*
- *To discover where you want to go, set out on a trip...*
- *To set out is to win the fight against the ordinary...*
- *Traveling means adding life to life...*
- *The world is a book, and one who does not travel reads only one page. (Augustine of Hippo)*
- *Life is a voyage, and the person who travels lives twice. (Omar Khayyam)*
- *Don't tell me who old you are, or how educated and cultured; tell me where you have traveled and what you know. (Mohammed)*
- *In geography as in morality, it is very difficult to understand the world without leaving home. (Voltaire)*
- *Traveling is like falling in love: the world is all new... (Jan Myrdal)*
- *If you make a long trip, let your baggage be light; you will be less tired and more likely to receive what will be given to you each new day. (Ezio Bianchi)*
- *The perfect trip is circular. The joy of departure, the joy of returning. (Dino Basili)*
- *People who never move cannot realize they are in chains. (Rosa Luxembourg)*
- *Ah! A trip bathes you in humility: it makes you aware of what a small place you occupy in the world. (Gustave Flaubert)*
- *Tourists demand, pilgrims kneel and give thanks. (Anonymous)*
- *Faith is not devotion to a sanctuary; it is an infinite pilgrimage of the heart. (Abraham Joshua Heschel)*
- *Going forth from oneself is also a going forth from the enclosed garden of one's own seemingly immovable convictions, if these risk becoming an obstacle, if they close off God's horizon. (Pope Francis)*
- *"A hidden desire makes many yearn for God, and holy places can be a true refuge for rediscovering oneself and finding again the necessary strength for one's own conversion." (Pope Francis)*

A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

...If you strive...for the future

Sometimes it happens that I hear simple reflections from someone more eloquent than I that clarify a thought or consideration that I had been wrestling with, in confusion.

I heard this affirmation from an expert in accompaniment and formation: “The common and widespread mentality today holds that something is good only if it pleases and satisfies; and the underlying criterion of good-for-me has now supplanted the criterion of good.” (See article by Antonio Montanari on "Incontro" [encounter], p. 6.) For us, who are both Christians and people consecrated “by a special title,” has the word “strive” or the word “sacrifice” been removed or at least put to the side?

I don’t think so, but I also think that we must constantly establish in ourselves attitudes of vigilance ... of conversion...

I picked up again Saint Angela’s words in the Rule: *“If you strive with all your might for a future”* (Prologue to the Rule, 23).

Saint Angela was not hiding reality and points out the road for us with great wisdom: there is no true following of the Lord Jesus if we do not strive, *“with all our might”* to live *“...as is required of the true spouses of the Most High”* (Prologue to the Rule, 23).

The spouses of the Most High are “poor little ones” who have received a gift so singular and great that other persons, no matter how important, cannot have it!

And so they are spouses who seek, with all their might, to live according to the Gospel and according to *“this holy Rule that God, through his grace, has offered to us”* (Prologue to the Rule 29).

The effort does not frighten them, and with good-natured determination they commit themselves to take up their own crosses and to walk every day toward the Lord toward the brothers and sisters whom he puts on their path, beginning with those closest.

It is precisely this walking toward our brothers and sisters that requires effort, because it involves mastering our instinctive impulses that push us to behave according to momentary feelings and reactions.

Charity, which directs everything "... to good for those who love God..." (Rm 8:28) is not easy or spontaneous; instead, it requires exactly this "effort" and "perseverance," in the certainty that the Lord accompanies and sustains us.

Saint Angela helps us to direct our efforts in the field of charity with very concrete pointers: **"...not answering arrogantly, not doing things unwillingly, not staying angry, not grumbling, not spreading gossip ..."** (Rule Ch. IX About Virginity, 15-19) because it does us no good to say "Lord, Lord" with our lips while our heart, the source of attitudes and behaviors, is far from the Gospel.

...But a great hope sustains us **"... for the future,"** as if to say that it is possible, and it must begin anew each day.

Maria Razza



A THOUGHT FROM THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION



A Letter to the Bishops from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life

On June 4, 2017, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life sent a letter to the bishops marking seventy years since the Apostolic Constitution “*Provida Mater*” (February 1947) and the follow-up motu proprio “*Primo Feliciter*” (March 1948). The letter invites the bishops to make the identity of secular institutes a part of the “*patrimony of the whole believing community*,” clarified gradually over time through the magisterium of the Church. The Company of St. Ursula, Secular Institute of St. Angela Merici – Federation, has also further understood and clarified its proper identity as a secular institute, in its particular federated form and in obedience to the charism of St. Angela Merici.

Allow me to share with you some elements of the clarified identity of secular institutes emphasized in the letter.

-The members of secular institutes are consecrated in ‘secularity’ to follow Christ through the profession of the evangelical counsels lived in the historical and social context in which their lay condition situates them. In this way they fulfill their baptismal calling and put their very existence at the service of God’s Reign. This sort of secular consecration is a form of consecrated life, fully and totally, and not a middle ground between baptismal consecration and religious consecration. It is consecration made before the Church, in a Church-approved institute, thus not private. Belonging to a secular institute involves all the dimensions of the consecrated person’s existence, in the commitment to follow Christ according to the charism of that institute, lived out in daily life, within history, for all one’s life.

Therefore it is a call to share a recognized charism which can create among the members sisterly relationships of mutual support, of growth in communion, of perseverance in their vocation.

-Secular consecration is based upon the mystery of the Incarnation through which Christ immersed himself in human reality and human history, giving himself over to the Father's love. The dynamic required of the person consecrated in secularity requires solid formation and practice, both in consecration and in secularity, without losing or diminishing either of the two aspects. In the life of the consecrated secular there is no sacred space and profane space, no time for God and time for petty or grand human affairs. In the world and in human history, "salvation history" comes to fulfillment. In this sense members of secular institutes live as contemplatives in the world, side by side with others, in the trust and the hope that flow from their relationship with God, the architect of this history. I like to recall these affirmations in the letter: *"Remaining in the world is the fruit of a choice, a response to a specific call: it means taking on this dimension of being within, of standing next to, of regarding the world as a theological reality (that is, where God can be encountered and known, where he makes himself present, works, and manifests himself – my note) where the historic dimension (the present moment of God's actions and manifestations) and the eschatological dimension (the full and definitive manifestation of God and the fulfillment of his salvation) are interwoven."*

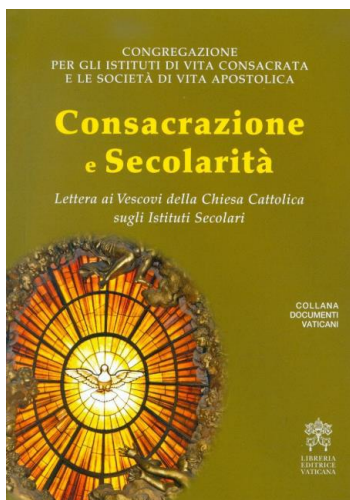
-The letter concludes by analyzing the particular challenges of secular consecration and its typical and distinctive spirituality. **The consecrated person in the world is expected to have a prophetic capacity for interpreting history and to behave as one living in God's light** and in the light of God's word. This is what Jesus and the prophets did in the midst of humanity, sowing hope, demonstrating the bright spots of God's action but also courageously denouncing, in attitude and in word, people's infidelities that blocked the fulfillment of salvation and emptied people of their rightful dignity. I recall that the prophet Elias and the prophet Jonah tried to flee from the world of people, but God intervened, sending them right

back among the very people whom they had tried to get away from. It is necessary to “stay within” [the world], to understand and to help others understand, to be companions on the road of human experience and, as Pope Francis says, “to initiate processes” of solidarity and justice – even if they are partial or tiny – with God’s own power, given to us by the Spirit in response to our insistent and trusting prayer.

This vocation requires an ability to hold together love for God, attention to his word and attention to the cry for help that rises from humanity. Love for God and love for the other can grow only together. Thus one proclaims God’s passionate love for human beings and looks upon human beings with the eye of God. Communion with Christ – that is the sacrament of love that enables us to be in communion with God and with people of all languages, cultures, generations and nations (as at Pentecost). It enables us to balance unity and differences in our own time, even with all the difficulty, openness, and intelligence that such balancing requires, the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s action. There can be no spiritual life without the docility of letting oneself be illuminated and guided by the action of the Spirit.

May the Madonna, mother of the incarnate Word, intercessor and disciple of Christ, obedient to the Spirit, be our teacher and model of listening to his word and serving her Son in our brothers and sisters.

+ *Adriano Tessarollo*



Pilgrimage of the Federation



*July 23-29,
2017*

*Slovakia
and Poland*



On pilgrimage in company...

Serenity and mutual openness...

Monday, July 24

Our pilgrimage began at the Hotel Ducale in **Venice (Favaro Veneto)**, where we had gathered together for dinner and a night together so we would all be ready for the departure at the crack of dawn on Monday, July 24. Twenty-six pilgrims and two drivers were on the bus when our journey began at 6:30 AM.



Our President Maria Razza invited us to experience this pilgrimage with a sense of gratitude toward the Company of Slovakia for the intense passion invested in organizing this

encounter. In particular, Mária, a member of the Company of Slovakia and councilor of the Federation, had been very insistent about holding an international meeting in her homeland in order to help us become familiar with their history and the reality of the life they live, and to enable us to meet the sisters who ordinarily do not take part in international assemblies. Mária had also planned a visit to the largest sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady, located in Levoča, where, during his visit in Slovakia, Pope John Paul II had celebrated Mass for an immense gathering of the faithful.

During the journey we received constant updates through contacts with Mária, who awaited our arrival in Košice and was so deeply pleased about this pilgrimage to sites of spirituality in their country.

The Assistant of the Federation Council, Bishop Adriano, kept us company with spiritual food for thought that created a sense of serenity and spirit of receptive openness and also helped us bear the strain of our pilgrim's journey.

It was a cool, rainy day. We prayed together and shared one another's concerns, and in particular listened to what our Congolese sister now living in Milan, Vittorina, and the vice-assistant Rev. Raymond, also from Congo, had to tell us about the situation of violence in their homeland.

Our bus trip took us through **Slovenia** and into **Hungary**. We reached the border of **Slovakia** in the evening and from there made our way to Košice, the city where Mária lives. There she was, waiting for us with a happy smile and wide open arms.

The trip was a special adventure because it proved difficult for



everyone just to sit on a bus for long hours with brief yet essential stops. Nonetheless, the new places we were seeing, the stretches of grassland and smooth rolling hills, the immense reaches of farmland, and the new roads spiked our curiosity and helped make passing the time little or no burden.

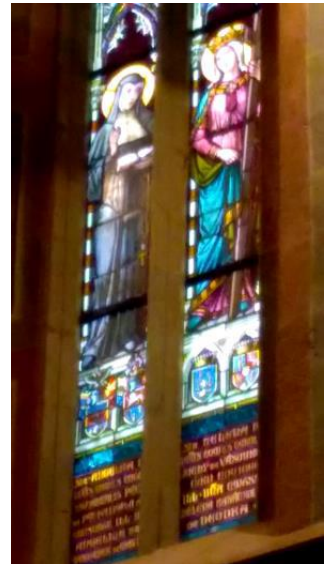
St. Angela always encourages us to encounter one another, and she herself had been a pilgrim to the holy places of Jesus Christ. Thus we were also able to support one another in bearing with inevitable difficulties, further heightening our familiarity and solidarity.

Tonina

***The joy of belonging to
a large family...
Tuesday, July 25***



From the very beginning of the pilgrimage I gave considerable thought to how I should begin this account but never came up with the right words.



It is not a simple matter to find words able to convey the emotions experienced, but I just let myself be guided by the Holy Spirit.

July 25: Accompanied by the coolness of gently falling rain, we began our visit of **Košice** and crossed the main street to reach the cathedral of St. Elizabeth.

With great joy we were welcomed there by the assistant of the Company of Slovakia and the smiles of several sisters.



Our Madre guided our every step. Great was our astonishment when we found ourselves admiring the image of St. Angela on one of the stained-glass windows of the **Chapel of St. Michael**.

An important stage in this day's tour was the visit to the **Cathedral of St. Martin**, with its varied architectural styles.

The various altars facilitated prayer and meditation, helping us become all the more aware of the beauty of the Gospel adapted to all generations and to a variety of nations. During the day we also had an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the Slovakian martyrs, models of great humanity.



The encounter and the exchange of views with the Slovakian sisters was a most fitting end to this day, with its atmosphere of deep sisterly togetherness.

What remains at the end of this pilgrimage?

Within me I harbor emotions, places, images, pleasant strolls, and sisterly moments, but above all the joy of belonging to a large family whose mother is Angela, a woman able to communicate to the hearts of one and all. Thank you to each sister! Praise to the Lover of us all!

Let us now continue the journey as we travel the roads and

streets of our respective neighborhoods, in harmony and united together.

Giusy of Bologna



*A culturally and spiritually
enriching pilgrimage...*
Wednesday, July 26



On July 26, the feast of St. Joachim and St. Anne, we visited the **Hill of Mary** (MariansKa Hora), 781 meters above sea level. This Marian site, a favorite pilgrim destination, is situated on the hill of Levoča. St. Pope John Paul II made an apostolic visit to it on July 3, 1995.



According to tradition, this sanctuary was constructed as an act of thanksgiving to the Virgin for having protected the local population from the Tartars in 1241-1242.

At the center of the altar in the church itself there is a gold-plated wooden statue of Our Lady saved despite numerous invasions and persecutions, and considered miraculous. Flanking our Lady are St. Joachim and St. Anne. We celebrated Mass in this beautiful place with our Slovakian sisters.



Levoča is a city of Slovakia and the county seat of the district of the same name in the region of Prešov. Entry into the old part of the city is through the monumental gate of Košice. Behind the gate are the baroque church of the Holy Spirit and the Franciscan monastery.

We visited the town hall constructed back in the XV-XVI century. It originally had Gothic finishings, but all this was replaced by

Renaissance finishings in the wake of a fire.



Depicted on one of the outside walls are the civic virtues: moderation, diligence, heroism, patience and justice.

We also visited the Gothic-style church dedicated to the Apostle James, which is the second largest church in Slovakia.

Above the main altar is the masterpiece of Master Pavol of Levoča, the largest wooden altarpiece of the late Gothic period with statues of Our Lady, St. James, and St. John and a dais

depicting the Last Supper. The most beautiful altarpieces are dedicated to Our Lady of the Snows, the Nativity, St. Anne, St. Catherine, and Sts. Peter and Paul. Several mural frescoes dating back to the XIV/XV century came to light during reconstruction works in the church back in 1960.

UNESCO added Levoča and the castle of Spiš to its list of world heritage sites on June 28, 2009.

The pilgrimage was culturally and spiritually enriching. It strengthened my faith.

My heartfelt thanks to all the sisters who organized everything. It was so beautiful to be together, united in joy, in sharing, and in being able to get to know one another all the better.

Maria Lucchesi, Company of Turin

***What's unexpected is always more beautiful
than what's foreseen. . .***

Castle of Spiš (Spissky Hrad)

After the splendid morning spent at the Hill of Mary and the visit to St. James Church in Levoča, equally exciting was the afternoon visit to a very special place in terms of sheer dimensions, architecture and what it has to offer inside: the castle of Spiš.

This is an important tourist attraction in the Slovakian region



of Košice, an historical site constructed on the ruins of a medieval castle and included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

This spectacular sight is already visible from the road below as it perches all alone on the top of a hill, almost unreachable. When illuminated in evening darkness it is called 'the

phantom' because it seems suspended in the air. The castle is quite photogenic from below, but what attracted us as we came closer, above and beyond its magnificence and its structure, which make it unique of its type, was its strategic position with a truly singular panorama.



The inside part of the castle is practically in ruins, but well attended to and with an allure all its own. The beauty of the panorama increases as one climbs up. This heightens curiosity, and what is most

striking of all is the interplay of lights, colors, contrasts, the landscape shifting back and forth from hills to meadows, and then those stones of various forms, sizes, and positions. The slightly cloudy conditions that day enabled us to make our visit without too much exertion.



We reached the top of the site after a rather demanding climb and from there enjoyed a marvelous panorama over the entire countryside with a seemingly endless view, the entire valley at our feet and enfolded in air that fills the lungs; in brief, once you get to the top

you realize it was well worth the effort.

What remains of all that?

The emotion experienced and the many thoughts pondered during the climb. A comparison between the magnificence of the castle conquered and the daily conquests of life where the common denominator is resolute effort:

- *never stop, but know how to go beyond;*
- *what's unexpected is always more beautiful than what's foreseen;*
- *the things gained through conquest are the most beautiful of all;*
- *pause to contemplate beauty and feel you are little yet precious;*
- *living means accepting challenges;*
- *create memories, because she who does not remember does not live;*
- *don't rush and miss the many riches that pass close to us;*
- *remember that in us too there are countless hidden riches.*

Last but not least, how can we help but conclude except by evoking St. Angela? She who was always journeying in her many travels and pilgrimages by foot or whatever means of transport she could find? What a splendid example to follow!

Maria Stella - Torino



So much beauty in our suitcase. . .
Thursday, July 27

This is our last day in Slovakia and we are preparing to depart for a visit to a tiny part of Poland.

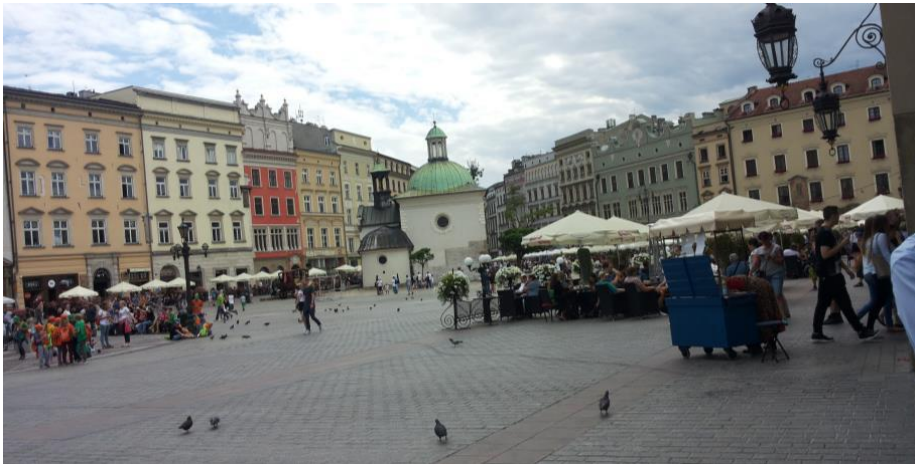
Our early rising makes it clear that many hours of travel time await us, but the trip as such doesn't worry us because so many days of being together have enlivened our hearts, and the hours to be spent on the bus will be nothing other than a time of sharing, joy and prayer.

We depart with so many lovely sensations in our hearts and suitcases full of all the beauty savored so far.

Appearing before our eyes after a few hours of travel are the outskirts of Krakow. The bus takes us to the center of the city and (something which never spoils the day) to the restaurant where we will have lunch.

Our local guide arrives right on the dot after lunch. She immediately begins speaking about the city of Krakow and we sense how fortunate we are since she is a person enamored of her city and immediately seeks to pass on to us a bit of her love for it.

She begins by explaining that Krakow was not bombed during World War II, and therefore everything we shall see is original, while the same cannot be said about Warsaw, for example, which had been rebuilt after the war.



The starting point of the guided visit is Krakow's huge central square covering 44 hectares and overlooked by numerous important churches. The center of the square has been the site of an important market ever since medieval times. Once upon a time dedicated to trade in fabrics and ceramic goods, nowadays there are stores with a good part of Poland's precious products, for example, silver and amber.

Krakow was also the episcopal see of Karol Wojtyla before he became Pope John Paul II and then Saint John Paul.



Therefore the guide took us for a quick outside visit of the bishop's residence where he had lived, and from where he departed for Rome to take part in the Conclave which would elect him Pope.

Our last stop in Krakow was the visit to the hill of Wawel to see the Royal Castle and the Royal Cathedral where the mortal remains of St. Stanislaus, the protector of Poland, are entombed and where all Polish kings have been crowned.

After the visit to the huge cathedral we went by bus to the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy where St. Faustina Kowalska lived and is buried. We experienced the joy of being able to kiss the relic of St. Faustina and relish a moment of prayer in the older sanctuary before going to visit the new and modern one better suited to receiving large numbers of pilgrims.

By evening we were already pretty tired, but still very much alive in us was the excitement of having lived a most beautiful and intense day together.



Our arrival at Częstochowa opened us wide to the Marian dimension of a 'mama' who had been waiting for us to arrive at her feet.

Personally, I cannot forget the moment when, having reached my hotel room on the sixth floor, I looked out the window and saw the Sanctuary of the Black Madonna, who was looking at me. . . .that was an intense moment of love, a moment when I truly felt myself to be daughter of a unique and special Mother.

Carla Alberti

A pilgrimage of prayer and praise
Friday, July 28



After a beautiful and intense day at Krakow, we woke up under somewhat cloudy skies. We were to meet at the Jasna Góra Sanctuary for Mass, and each one of us made her way there as soon as possible in order to pray before the ever-sweet face of the “Black Madonna.”

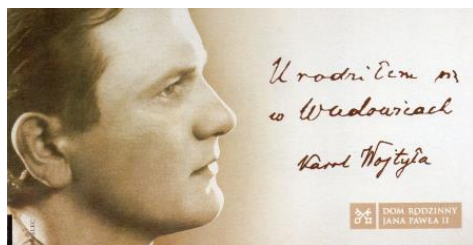
The encounter with our Polish sisters at the Sanctuary was affectionate and joyful. . . it was a mutually moving encounter, and we felt strengthened in trust and hope.

The Sanctuary was in semi-darkness. People could be heard as they prayed, and evident in the distance was a most beautiful golden frame around the Black Madonna, who looks right into the eyes and heart of each pilgrim. We all stood there in silence before the Madonna, entrusting to her all our thoughts, our concerns, and our wishes. . .





The Eucharistic celebration at the main altar was presided over by Bishop Adriano Tessarollo, Assistant of the Federation Council, and concelebrated by Father Raymond, vice-Assistant, and a priest who had accompanied our Slovakian sisters throughout the pilgrimage. It was a solemn Mass with its own readings. . .we too felt privileged and prayed for all our sisters and all the Companies. We also entrusted the preparation and celebration of the Federation Assembly in 2018 to the Madonna.



Shortly after that we departed for Wadowice, the town where John Paul II was born. Along the way we passed not far from Auschwitz and in our prayers remembered all the victims of that tragedy that had befallen Poland and Europe at large.



Awaiting us in Wadowice were the cathedral with so many images of John Paul II and his family home, which now houses an impressive museum. The apartment where he was born and lived as an infant, a child, and a young man has been reconstructed to look just as it was back then, and there are rooms in the building that focus on the various phase of his life, with film clips, photographs and collections of objects.

Having bid farewell to our Slovakian sisters, we set off for a long night that would bring us back to Mestre for our return to our respective cities of residence. It was a pilgrimage of prayer, of praise for the beauty of nature and art, and for the joy of being company.

Thank you, Lord!

Edda



Snippets of emotion

Great joy!

From July 24 to 28, 2017, we participated in a pilgrimage organized by the Federation.

These days were a great joy. Not only because we could be together with the Italian sisters, but also because we had the possibility of admiring together the beauties of our own county and also of praying together in the Marian sanctuaries of Levoča and Czestochowa.

There were very intense moments of prayer, especially the rosary at the "Pažica" near Spišská Kapitula, the meeting with several Polish sisters at Czestochowa, and all the Eucharistic celebrations.

Thanks be to God for this pilgrimage. It was a great gift for us. Thanks to all the organizers, priests, and participants.

Mária and the Slovakian sisters

An emotional journey...

It was an emotional journey. I come home richer in knowledge and gratitude for the good fortune of having had this time which was free but not empty. I enjoyed the beauty of creation: the countryside, the animals, and the weather. I savored and loved the traditions, the habits, and the costumes of the people in the places I experienced. I focused on remembering and experiencing the culture, the art, and the thousand riches of the places we saw. And there was time for thought, prayer, and thanksgiving for the grace given to us and surely to the people that we traveled with.

Maria Stella

The power of unity...

In my heart remains the perception of the faith of these people, a faith that has built them up and has made their history a sacred history with its times of acute suffering and times of resurrection.

Meeting the Slovakian sisters was truly wonderful; they enriched me with their fresh enthusiasm that could overcome so many difficulties. It is a beautiful Company that has grown through the “contagion of faith,” as Pope Francis says.

Passing close to Auschwitz moved me deeply... and praying together calmed me by synthesizing so much suffering and evil with so much holiness and love that were experienced there.

At Czestochowa meeting and exchanging affectionate greetings with the Polish sisters, however briefly, brought happy emotions. In the sanctuary of the Black Madonna, the faith that I observed around me strengthened my own faith. Truly this is a place where one can breathe in such deep faith and such a powerful presence of Mary, mother of Jesus and our mother!

In Poland the figure of Pope John Paul II followed us everywhere, but, in his birthplace at Wadowice, meeting the little Karol who would become such a giant in the Church moved me deeply and impressed me once again with how God makes greatness out of our littleness if we entrust it to him in faith.

Sisterhood and closeness grew among us pilgrims through our experiences. I felt close to all and once more recognized the unifying power of our charism.

Claudia Bedendo – Company of Padua

Experience of faith...

I had an exceptional experience of faith which will always stay with me. I am happy to have had these opportunities to share faith within the Company and to have new understandings of the Church's life in the world.

Tonina

Beautiful sharing...

It was all a beautiful experience, but here is what particularly marked me, what I carry in my heart and have shared since the pilgrimage with the sisters of Slovakia: their presence – discrete, attentive, active and joyful – has showed me, once more, how beautiful it is today to follow the path traced out by St. Angela, and what fullness of life there is within her Rule!

Mirella

Enrichment...

Our eyes are still full of beautiful sights and of the roads walked by Companies open to the world. My strongest sentiment is gratitude ... to Mária D. for having suggested this pilgrimage, to those who organized it, to those who participated, to Saint Angela and to "the Lover of us all," who permitted this cultural, human, and spiritual enrichment.

Maria Rocca

FROM THE COMPANIES AND THE GROUPS

Caltanissetta: 70th anniversary of the death of Marianna Amico Roxas



On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the death of Ven. Marianna Amico Roxas we gathered together in a festive spirit at San Cataldo last June 24 to celebrate and reflect on Marianna's witness during her moment in history and in her message for us today. Present were civic and religious authorities, Marianna's relatives and friends, as well as the Companies of

Agrigento and Armerina. It was beautiful to be together to give thanks and share the joy for the gifts the Lord wished and still wishes to grant to the Church and the Company through Marianna. The Company wanted to celebrate this anniversary with a commemorative plaque on the building erected on the site of the house where she had lived from 1883 to 1943. The unveiling of the plaque was followed by the Eucharistic celebration presided over by the local bishop, with numerous concelebrants.



In her words of welcome, Carmelina Burgio, the directress of the Company of Caltanissetta, underscored that Marianna's life *“had been a sign of the beauty and tenderness of God, the very face of mercy through her heroic charity open to all the needs of her brothers and sisters. She*

had lived a constant outreach toward God, her brothers and sisters and the world, that world saved and redeemed by Jesus.” She explained how Marianna had known how to live that synthesis between action and contemplation desired by St. Angela.

Beautiful indeed were the mayor’s words regarding the legacy handed down by Marianna: *“being citizens active in the construction of a more human City that may be the house of all, where each person gives his or her contribution in weaving relationships based on evangelical values.”* He then described Marianna in these terms: *“A clear and vigorous example of a Christianity both experienced and practiced. . . a timely point of reference in our community to be taken as an example and a guide, especially during these times when social tension is heightened by those who stir up public awareness at the expense of those who ask to be welcomed, respected and assisted.”*

Sr. Rosa Graziano, the Postulator of the Cause, spoke during Mass and depicted Marianna as a disciple of the Word, a person able to foster life in others. She also exalted Marianna’s spiritual beauty *“which became love through silence and the Word,”* her simplicity and interior life, and her witness of life and harmony.

In his homily the bishop said, among other things: *“In three words beginning with the letter C I would like to summarize what Marianna’s life was: the C of contemplation, the C of catechesis and the C of charity. Marianna lived out of contemplation and always cultivated this flower in her heart. Teaching the Gospel and teaching doctrine were dear to her heart. Charity for her became relationship, dialogue, encounter, attention to the poor and to the littlest of all.”*

Heartfelt thanks and a special prayer to the Lord for all those who were close to us during this moment of joy.

May Marianna intercede for us that we may be ever more able to understand and live our vocation.

G.S.



Modena – Bologna Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of Saint Angela Merici

The various initiatives marking this special “Jubilee Year” of ours included a pilgrimage to Desenzano del Garda and Brescia organized by the Parish of St. Francis of Modena for Saturday, June 17, 2017. We were forty-seven pilgrims, including the pastor of St. Francis (our former Assistant) and Fr. Simone, our current Assistant.



The first stretch took us to Le Grezze, now a neighborhood of Desenzano, where we admired the parish dedicated to St. Angela and meditated on her. We then went to the house where she had lived: an Ursuline sister enlightened and enchanted us with her words about the person and the charism of our holy Madre. We had lunch at the Casa S. Angela in Brescia and the reception extended to us was as kind and amiable as always . . . a good stop and a nice one too!

In the afternoon Giuseppina took us on a guided tour of the various places and churches so familiar to St. Angela during her life, and our last stop was the old cathedral, awesome in its cylindrical form dating back to Romanesque times and erected on various levels.

Following these visits we gathered together in the Sanctuary of St. Angela, where our priests concelebrated Mass. To our great joy, present with us were the President Maria Razza and Ileana, who had come expressly from Piacenza. At the end of the Eucharistic celebration we sang “*Sulle trace di Angela*” [in the footsteps of Angela] and then posed in front of St. Angela for a group photo marking this splendid day. Since we hadn’t been able to stop and admire Lake Garda during our outbound trip because of time constraints, the driver kindly went out of his way on our return trip and took us along the lakeside drive so we could admire such wonders of nature.

Ever memorable about this excursion/pilgrimage is a profound sense of astonishment and admiration for the figure of St. Angela: a courageous woman and a pioneer, who gave new and marvelous dignity to women.

Luisa



CANADA – 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMPANY

Celebrating together...

In August we went to Canada, invited for the 50th anniversary of the Company there. It was a joy and an honor to participate with the President, Maria Rosa, in celebrating such an important anniversary with our sisters of North America.

I experienced this celebration with a bit of nostalgia, too... thinking back to twenty years ago, when I went with the councilor Maria Rosa Bernasconi to celebrate their thirtieth anniversary, invited by the then-directress and initiator of the Company in Canada, our dearest Jacqueline,

The Company of Canada is very small, but worldwide... Over the years they have been able to multiply... a new Company was born in Toronto, a Group in the United States, and a fine Group in the Philippines. This Company is already worldwide in itself, as well as by its insertion in the Federation.



The President and I were with them to celebrate, to give thanks, and to experience our unity as one great and beautiful family.

In June of this year, Jacqueline returned to her heavenly homeland. Today we no longer see her seated among us, directing this meeting as the teacher about life and the vocation, but she is very present. We know and we trust, as Saint Angela said, that Jacqueline too *is more alive now than when we saw her in the flesh, and now sees us and knows us better and is more able to and wants to help us...*

With Saint Angela, she is today *and continually among us, with her Lover, who is also ours and the Lover of all.*

No nostalgia, then... we live in the Communion of Saints and we celebrate and give thanks.

Before the meeting, the President and I were guests of Thérèse, now the vice-directress. Following Jacqueline, Thérèse had been the directress, an incomparable head for the Company.

During the meeting we were in a house of spirituality, marking this great 50th anniversary of the Company. Everything had been prepared down to the tiniest detail: welcome, decorations, organization, projections, presentations, liturgy, spirituality, a concert ... and a great party together.

I very much admired the little Company of Canada for the commitment and fidelity they demonstrated in each challenge.

Three members of the Company in **Quebec** (Canada's French-speaking region) can



travel: the directress Réjeanne, the vice-directress Thérèse, and the councilor Gertrude. Although they are elders, they have not lost their courage. They do everything they can and are especially enthusiastic about their vocation and feel a lively sense of belonging to the Company.

Also belonging to the Company of Canada is the Group of sisters in the **United States**, guided by Mary-Cabrini, a councilor of the Federation. They are five sisters, living very far apart... several hours by air. Two



sisters of this Group – Elena and Marie Chantal – made or renewed (respectively) their consecration during the meeting.

Mary-Cabrini conducts their formation on the internet, using Skype to see one another and converse at a distance.

Two members of the other Company in Canada, that is, the Company of **Toronto**, arrived to share in the festivities for the 50th anniversary. The Company of Toronto also includes a Group of the Philippines, which has fifteen members.

French is the language of Quebec, while English is spoken in the United States, Toronto, and the Philippines. You can imagine the effort required just to be understood, not to mention to conduct meetings, carry out formation, and stay in touch. There are always several of them present, at great personal sacrifice, at the Federation's international meetings. We know them and they remember us and feel a



lively sense of belonging to the worldwide Company.

To summarize, besides the grace of the meeting itself, for me the trip to Canada represented a lesson and a motivation to get moving, to act... as much as possible, to live the Merician charism and make it grow, enlarging the mind and the heart without fear of any boundary and without closing in on oneself in the face of inevitable difficulties.

We offer hopes and prayers, for them as for us all, that new vocational sprouts may appear; and may *the Company endure as long as the world shall last...*

Kate



Cameroun: Return to Yaoundé

My second trip to Yaoundé, taken in August 2017, has been, once again, filled with amazed gratitude for God's action in the hearts open to welcome him.



As I was to undertake this trip on my own, I started out with some apprehension considering the climate of international insecurity fostered by the media; then rapidly, my Camerounese companions' warm welcome dispelled all trace of concern.

The "Maison Pallotin" offered a perfect setting for silence and reflection to the thirteen retreatants that we were! On the topic "Let us ask for the grace of becoming good soil for the Lord," Father Yannick, the superior of the Pallotine Fathers, guided us on the path of mental and vocal prayer.

The spiritual exercises ended on August 17 with the consecration for life of Rufine Mfoumou-Mbele, the first consecration of Claire Mballa, and the entry of Marie-Crescence Ewono-Ekani into the period of trial.

The group in charge were renewed with the following responsibilities: Tarcille Akamba remains the delegated leader of the Group; Angèle Tassi-Mbida, the vice-delegate; Nathalie-Thérèse Essouma, the treasurer; and Christine Mbia-Onana, the secretary. Marie Joséphine Essomba will carry on her mission of formation.

That is the "good soil" of Cameroun, where the Lord and Saint Angela have been digging a few furrows for the Company since 1994. Let us ask them for the grace of persevering faithfully in the venture that has begun.

Jeanne Lagrave of the Company of France

Company of Indonesia



We had our National Assembly of the Company of Saint Ursula of Indonesia from July 9 to 13, 2017, at the Carmel Retreat House, Lembang, near Bandung. Sr. Emmanuel Gunanto, OSU, led the retreat beautifully; the atmosphere was full of loving joy. Twelve sisters attended the meeting, all

from the Company of Saint Ursula of Indonesia.

Our theme "Living in Joy" was a meditation on our virginity, which in terms of Saint Angela's spirituality means living as the spouse of the Most High: joyful, loving abundantly, full of faith and hope in God.

Our sister Maria Tanumiharja made her first consecration on July 11 in a Mass celebrated by Father Agus, OSC. Also, Meity renewed her consecration on her 25th anniversary.

With joy we introduce to you our newly elected Council of the Company of St. Ursula of Indonesia, who were also blessed during the Mass, ready to be on duty from 2017 to 2023: Directress: Lydia Anggraeni Kidarsa (Lyd), Vice-directress: Lusia Kaminah (Lusia), Secretary: Crescentiana Aso (Ona), Treasurer: Yohana Eny Prihatiningsih (Eny).

Please guide us and keep us in your prayers.

Lydia

Madagascar: August 2017

An appreciated charism...

While various Italian Companies were gathering for spiritual exercises, in Madagascar, Congo and Canada consecrations and renewals were being celebrated... New vocations on the Lord's vine!

I bring you a particular greeting from Madagascar, where I went with Dina of the Company of Como.

After a long trip, we arrived at Fianarantsoa, where the sisters were waiting for us impatiently at the end of their spiritual exercises.

After preparation and meetings, on August 26 Benedicte made her first consecration, while Sylvia made her final consecration. The Group is growing more and more stable, aware of the riches of this particular calling, but also of the difficulties and problems of living the Gospel consistently in their daily surroundings of family, work, and mission.

We met new young women eager to answer the Lord's call in secular consecration, a charism that is still little known but much appreciated by the clergy and bishops.

Thanks to the Lord and thanks to all of you, dear sisters, for your support and prayers!

M. Rosa of Como

I am very happy... full of charity, faith, and hope in God...

Now I am truly very happy, because we share the same choice, the same goal. I made my perpetual consecration in the Company of St. Ursula on August 26, 2017.

I particularly thank Cassilde for the formation that she has imparted to me; despite her precarious health, she has sought to



transmit to me the spirituality of Saint Angela and of the Constitutions of the Company.

I feel that I have received so much grace through M. Rosa B., who has helped me discern in my daily life, through the witness of her life and commitment. I thank her because her coming for three consecutive years has greatly helped me. She is a true spiritual mother, who has sustained and counseled me for this path and perseverance in the Company....

I also thank Father Beretta, who has been a spiritual guide pointing me toward the path of fidelity in following God's call. He has a true missionary heart.

Finally, thanks to the sisters of the whole world for their prayers and for the spiritual union that unites us and makes us live as a Company.

Now let us all stay united in happiness with the Virgin Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit exults in God my savior ... because the Almighty has done great things in me" (Luke 1:46-48).

May the good God bless each member of the Company in the world.

Marie Sylvie





Company of Brazil – South

**Aparecida, Queen of Brazil:
300 years of love and faith
in the hearts of the Brazilian
people**

Brazil is a challenge on account of the distance and having to change from one form of transport to another, but it is also a time of great happiness, on account of the encounters, being able to share life together, reflecting and planning for the future, and feeling part of their ecclesial and civic communities.



After
visiting
Penedo (RJ)
and Guarulhos
(SP), I went
to Salvador
(Bahia),



where I met with Hayse Lyra, and we
participated together in the Assembly of
the Secular
Institutes of
Brazil, September

7-10.

They were intense days of sharing, study, and cultural experiences. With a four-year term concluding, we planned for the future and elected a new council.

The theme of the Assembly of Secular Institutes was: ***Mary, Mother and Handmaid, Disciple of the Lord.***

The theme was touching because at this





time we are commemorating the 300 years since some fishermen discovered the image of the Madonna, patron of Brazil under the title Our Lady Aparecida [emerging].

This theme was studied in relationship to **“Consecration and Secularity,”** with reflection

on this letter from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life addressed to all bishops on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of *Provida Mater Ecclesia*.

I thank God and all the sisters for their welcome, particularly Hayse, who put me up for over three days in her home...

I remember you with great affection and prayer, united together with all the Companies of the world! May God bless us.

Ursula Inês Schmitz



INCOMING MAIL

The Company on the road...

In her Fifth Counsel, Saint Angela tells us: *“Please go often, as you have time and opportunity...and visit your dear daughters and sisters.”*

In her time, the territories were those of the parish, the diocese... Today the Company reaches around the world; with the Federation, this vista extends beyond borders and makes us all feel united.

This summer particularly we encountered this universality of the Company as we joyfully met sisters in their own countries.

After having experienced intensely in April the global reality of the Company with the sisters from Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore in Saint Angela’s own places... we experienced in July the wonderful pilgrimage to Slovakia and Poland. Intense days of meeting and sharing... despite the difficulty of languages, we felt our communion with one another. We prayed together, visited sites of natural beauty and human achievement, recalling human history....

At Spissa, where we stayed in the seminary, we shared an evening with the whole Company of Slovakia. Thanks to all the sisters for their meaningful witness.

M. Rosa of Como



From the Company of D.R. Congo:

During the annual retreat in August 2017, the Company of Congo welcomed six consecrations: Isabelle and Aristide made their first consecration;

Elisabeth and Odette renewed; Pascaline and Régine made their consecration for life.

The group that was to become the Company of Congo was born on September 21, 1999, thanks to Jeanne Lagrave, Germaine, Denise, and Father JounEAU. Together, let us give thanks to God!

From the Company of Slovakia:

At the conclusion of our spiritual exercises (September 2017) we send greetings and are praying for the Federation.



At Trent, for Burundi:

On September 23 in Trent there was a reunion of the group supporting the Company of Burundi....

We benefited from the presence (here in his hometown) of Father Modesto, our friend and indefatigable missionary, and, for us, the essential companion and formator of the Burundian sisters.

We exchanged news, information, plans... in the desire to support this new African Company with prayer, closeness in spirit, formation, and necessary material assistance.



Presidents together ...

Lina, Kate, Maria Rosa

Still in Trent, the two most recent presidents had the great joy of encountering Lina Moser, who remembered and is remembered by all with great affection and gratitude.

Lina was the president before Elisa Tarolli. She has now joined the Company of Heaven.



From Innsbruck, Austria

The president visited with Teresa Hofle, Valeria (directress of Trent), and Miriam (German/Italian translator).

Now both Teresa and Silvia belong to the Company of Trent, to the great joy of all.



From Bangladesh



Luciella, who faithfully keeps up correspondence with the only sister in Bangladesh, has received from Jhunu these moving lines:

"I wish you well. I pray for all of you and ask Saint Angela's intercession. I've been doing better for some time now... and, with the help of Padre Franco, was able to make my annual

retreat for five days. Thank you for being my big sister; you are always beside me, and I with you...."

Visit our renovated website!

It welcomes you with the words of Saint Angela Merici, our Madre and Foundress:

“May the strength and the true consolation of the Holy Spirit be in you all” (Prologue to the Counsels 3)

This is how the people in charge of the site present it:

*We have the pleasure of announcing
the new version of our website which, as you can tell,
has a completely new graphic presentation
and a sunny and lively design
that is adapted to all systems, full of colors and images.
Fresh life, updated contents!
The new site aims to be a valuable instrument
for contacts, information,
and study of our charism and our institute.
In the course of the year, it will be updated with articles
drawn from our periodicals and collections,
from initiatives and events.
Furthermore, materials from our meetings and assemblies
will be published.
We wish you good navigation
and await all your ideas and cues
to make it an ever more useful tool!*

**It's up to us to keep it lively and current: send... send quickly...
send immediately... lots of material to Maria Rocca:
mariarocca@alice.it**

For the Assembly

God the Father, grant that we may again see marvels, directing all to your glory and to the good of the Company. Through your customary goodness, grant now to our leaders the graces and the gifts for governing according to your love and your will.

Jesus Christ, our only treasure, to you we have promised our virginity and our very selves. In you, in the Company, we are bound to one another with the bonds of charity; in you we esteem one another, we help one another, we support one another. Help us to put our full commitment and energy into doing our duty well.

Holy Spirit, we ask you for strength and true consolation, so that we may be able to sustain and carry out the charge to which we have been called.

Saint Angela, you have promised to be always with us, helping us with our prayers. Now you can see us and know us better, and you want to and can help us; be with us for the good of each and all. You, who have called us to be sisters and mothers, grant that we may remain united in heart, and in that way we will be certain that every grace that we ask of God will infallibly be granted to us. You have invited us to make a careful examination of the government; grant that in this look at ourselves, in this spiritual discussion together, we may find joy and consolation and that this may be of no little benefit to us. As we come together, we want to be aware of all our sisters and have them sculpted in our minds and hearts one by one...their names, their condition, their character, their every situation and their very being. Stay with us along with our Lover, that he may illuminate us and instruct us as a true and good Teacher about what we must do.

May God bless us:

in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Kate

For internal use